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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

14 May 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Political Consequences of a US Proposal for a World-wide Moratorium on Nuclear Weapons Tests

NOTE

This memorandum does not attempt to estimate the effect of the proposed moratorium upon the US nuclear program or upon the relative military capabilities of the US and the USSR.

I. The Non-Communist World

1. The governments and peoples of the non-Communist world would almost certainly applaud and support a US proposal for a world-wide moratorium on nuclear tests. They would consider such a proposal a proof of US good sense and restraint and a pointed reply to Communist charges that the US seeks to terrorize and dominate the world. Our NATO allies, especially the UK, would be even more enthusiastic if the US proposal were made after consultation with them.

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2. The governments of our allies, and their military and scientific advisors, would almost certainly estimate that before making the proposal the US had carefully calculated the effect the moratorium would have upon the US nuclear program and upon the Western strategic position. Therefore, political leaders would probably conclude that the moratorium would impede the USSR at least as much as it would the US, and, in any case, they would probably estimate that the political advantages would outweigh any scientific and technical disadvantages. Some scientific and other technically qualified leaders in allied states would probably be disturbed about the effect the moratorium would have on US nuclear research and development, but others would enthusiastically support the moratorium.

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3. Some of our allies, [REDACTED] might suggest that the moratorium apply only to tests of weapons over, say, 10 KT. In supporting or suggesting this proposal, they would probably reason that nuclear tests below that magnitude could not be detected with absolute certainty, and that a moratorium of tests below that magnitude would not be observed by the USSR but would have to be honored by the US [REDACTED] They would probably also reason that restricting weapons tests in this way would be popular in the non-Communist world, would allow Western

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tests of small-yield weapons, and would divert popular attention from the H-Bomb.

4. Together with the initial approval of the proposal, however, there would almost certainly be a widespread feeling throughout the non-Communist world that the moratorium would have little value unless it constituted the first step toward a world-wide agreement permanently restricting or prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons. Pressure for such an agreement would probably increase during the period of the moratorium. As the end of the moratorium period approached, a strong disposition would probably develop for extending it. Increased willingness would develop in some countries to accept a plan for nuclear disarmament which the US would consider unsatisfactory.

5. If the US should carry out nuclear tests during discussions of the proposal, there would almost certainly be strong criticism and hostility throughout the non-Communist world. Moreover, resumption of nuclear tests after expiration of the moratorium would almost certainly cause a wave of popular feeling against the state which first resumed its testing program.

6. The Indian government would probably consider the proposal a US surrender to Indian and other criticism of the

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March tests. At the conference which almost certainly would be called to discuss the moratorium, India would probably seek to expand the US proposal into an agreement banning the use of nuclear weapons and possibly into a moratorium on production of nuclear weapons. Such an Indian initiative would probably gain substantial support in the UN.

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II. The Communist Reaction

7. The Communist leaders would almost certainly make a careful study of the proposal and its significance before they made an official reply. In their estimate, we believe that they would consider the following factors:

a. US motives in making the proposal. The Communist leaders would probably be uncertain concerning the motives behind the US proposal. They would probably estimate, at least initially, that the following motives were all involved in the US decision:

(1) That the US hoped to obtain a positive political and propaganda advantage from the proposal and at the same time to deflate the Communist "peace" campaign.

(2) That the US hoped that a moratorium would cripple or at least hamper Soviet weapons development, at a time when the US research and development program had reached established goals.

(3) That the US, alarmed by the storm of protests over the March nuclear weapons tests, disturbed about the growing strength of the campaign to prohibit

the use of nuclear weapons, and distressed by the recent strains upon the alliance, had been forced to issue the proposal.

b. The Monitoring and Policing Problem. The Communists are probably well aware that the US has substantial capabilities for detecting Soviet nuclear tests. They probably believe that US surveillance involves the use of information and techniques which the US would not wish to disclose, and that the evidence or proof of tests derived through these techniques might not be sufficiently clear to convince world opinion that the USSR had violated the moratorium. Indeed, they might believe that a US effort to condemn the USSR for an alleged violation of the moratorium would offer the Communists opportunities to confuse and divide the non-Communist world.

c. Effects of a Moratorium on Communist and Western Military Capabilities. The USSR almost certainly estimates that it will need to stage a few weapons tests reasonably soon in order to incorporate recent research work into more advanced and efficient weapons. However, the Kremlin probably believes that, in general, weapons tests are more important for the US nuclear program than they are for the Soviet program. It almost certainly believes that nuclear

weapons, especially those for strategic use, play a more important role in Western military strategy than they do in Communist strategy. Therefore, provided the USSR had completed its next series of tests, it would probably estimate that a moratorium on weapons tests would not impair Soviet capabilities more than it would those of the US.

d. Political Effects of a Moratorium. The Communists would probably estimate that they could counteract the initial favorable effects of the US proposal on the non-Communist world. They would probably estimate that they could incorporate the proposal into their "peace" campaign and (with left-wing and neutralist support) could convert it into the standard Soviet proposal to ban the use of nuclear weapons. They would estimate that many peoples and some governments, notably the Indian and Japanese, would support the extension of the US proposal to one including such a ban. In their view, such a development would probably destroy the initial profit the US had gained from making its proposal, would increase the urgency of the demand for some kind of weapons control or ban, and would help to blur the distinction in world opinion between the US program for international atomic control and the Soviet program.

8. Probable Communist Courses of Action.

a. In their propaganda, the Communists would probably denounce this proposal as an American trick designed to

quiet the "universal demand" for a ban on nuclear weapons. At the same time, they would probably declare that the US proposal, unsatisfactory as it was, had been forced by the Communist "peace" campaign and that it should be regarded only as a step toward banning the use of nuclear weapons.

b. The Kremlin would probably examine the proposal for a moratorium for some time before making an official reply. We believe that it would seek to delay discussion until any tests which it may have scheduled had been completed. The Kremlin would then probably agree to discuss the proposal, either at a large international conference called by the UN Disarmament Committee or at a "Big Five" conference, but it would almost certainly suggest that the proposal be expanded into a larger program involving a ban upon the use of nuclear weapons. It would probably oppose any attempt to exclude tests of weapons under 10 KT, arguing that only a moratorium on all weapons tests would bring progress toward peace.

c. In the last analysis, we believe that the Kremlin would probably accept the moratorium, convinced that the US [REDACTED] would be forced by world opinion,

[REDACTED] to honor

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the agreement. It would almost certainly observe the moratorium until such time as the Soviet research program had progressed to the point where new tests would be desirable - approximately one year. The Soviet decision then would depend upon the political situation throughout the world and upon the Soviet estimate of the advantages it would gain from violating or denouncing the moratorium. In any case, the Kremlin would continue research in and production of all types and sizes of weapons.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

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Acting Chairman

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